

Christmastide - God Is With Us

Christmastide is the season celebrating Jesus' birth, running on past his childhood into his earthly ministry. It is not the uniformly happy time that is sometimes portrayed; the murder of the other children in Bethlehem, commonplace though it was - and is - still gives a reality past the Christmas cake sentimentality. Indeed, in the middle ages Childermas was as important as Christmas; in a time when infant mortality was so high it gave people space to grieve and celebrate their lost children.

Christmastide runs from Christmas Day to Shrove Tuesday. It therefore can contain as few as six, or as many as eleven weeks or parts of weeks.

Sentences for Season

For Christmas Day

Glory to God in the highest! And on earth, peace and good wil to all, with whom He is pleased.

For other days

The Word became flesh; he lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

Creeds

From the North comes Justice, the Prince of Peace.
From the East comes Wisdom, the Bright Morning Star
From the South comes Sweetness, the Lover and Beloved
From the West comes Renewal, the First and the Last

I believe in the One God
I believe in the One who creates a new world
I believe in the One who creates a new escape
I believe in the One who creates a new me

I believe in the One God

I touch the power of the earth where a tree is born
I touch the power of the rocks where a wasp is born
I touch the power of the peat where a flame is born
I touch the power of the road where a hope is born
I touch the power of the sea where a whale is born
I touch the power of the river where a trout is born
I touch the power of the bed where a child is born
I touch the power of the manger where a life is born

Earth, rocks, peat, road, sea, river, bed,
manger, cross, grave and mountain top

I touch you,

I bind you around me,

I trust in your power,

in the name of the Three in One, the One in Three

Prayers for Weeks

Christmas Day - 25 December

God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, you are with us, a human being like us, born like us, dying like us, risen from death like us. May you be born in our hearts anew, as we are born anew, day by day, year by year, once and for all. Amen

First Sunday after Christmas

Lord Jesus, whose birth led to violence, death and sorrow in the town of your birth, may we never close our eyes to the violence and sorrow endured by those around us, whatever the cause, but share in their pain and stand alongside them in their anger and grief, that you may return to them and bring them and us to safety, comfort and hope. Amen

Second Sunday after Christmas

Lord Jesus, to whom all roads lead and whom all knowledge describes, all crafts reveal and all worship honours, lead us to your house, to your side, and to your throne, that we may offer you true knowledge, true skill and true worship. Amen

Third Sunday after Christmas

Lord God of all, who speaks in all your creation, help us in our exile to hear your voice, that one day, when we know the old ruler of our lives to be dead in us, we may return to our true home alongside you. Amen

Fourth Sunday after Christmas

Lord God, Creator of the Universe, who did not despise a human form, a human womb, a human workplace, come to us now where we are, call us to your service, and grant us the grace and the strength to listen and to follow you, however familiar the words and however humble the road that lead to your presence, purpose and resurrection in glory. Amen.

Fifth Sunday after Christmas

Light of light, shining in all your creation, lighting every human heart, shine in us now and for ever, that we might shine with your light in the dark places of your world. Amen

Sixth Sunday after Christmas

Creator God, who fed five thousand from a couple of fish and a batch of bread, remind us that we can feed everyone who is hungry with what you have given us, provided always and only that we love our neighbour as ourselves. Amen

Seventh Sunday after Christmas

Lord our God, who made the Sabbath for us, forgive us when we turn the Sabbath against our fellows, and transform the freedom of your grace into a burden of law, and then refuse to help those crushed by it, in the name of your son who carried the burden of the law to the Cross and nailed it there. Amen

Eighth Sunday after Christmas

Lord of the True City, who has invited us the greatest of parties and the most joyous of feasts, open our eyes to read your invitation, lest we find our places taken by the poor, the beggars, the prostitutes and the forgotten, and have to hang around in the darkness outside until they have found their seats and filled their glasses. Amen.

Ninth Sunday after Christmas

Lord God, Creator of the universe, who for our sake became a baby in a manger, the treasure buried in the barren fields of our hearts, the seed sown on our stony, weed-filled and sun-scorched lives, help us to see your light shining from everything we see, everything we touch, everything we hear, so that we may harvest a hundred-fold what you have sown, and happily sell all that we have now to take hold of your glory, now and for ever. Amen

Tenth Sunday after Christmas

God who gives hope and strength to every human being, and who faced the manger, the crowd and the cross without fear, help us to face our own lives without fear, instead trusting in your ultimate love, joy and purpose. Amen

Eleventh Sunday after Christmas

Great Lord of all, welcomed by an unborn baby and rejected by the well-born and mighty, may we joyfully surrender our power and dignity to become little children, welcoming you, playing and dancing with you, and leaping for joy whenever we see you, here or hereafter. Amen

Days of the Week

Sunday

I ask you to come into this world, and yet you are already here
I ask you to come into my world, and yet you are already here
I ask you to come into my heart, and yet you are already here
Lord, open my eyes, open my arms, open my heart
You can do this, because you are here, in my eyes, my arms, my heart.

Monday

Christ in the manger, I pray for the children
Christ in the manger, I pray for the mothers
Christ in the manger, I pray for the fathers
Christ in the manger, I pray for the desperate
Christ in the manger, I pray for the forgotten
Christ in the manger, I pray for the imprisoned
Christ in the manger, I pray for the betrayed
Christ in the manger, I pray for the world
For the world in which you are the Christ.

Tuesday

Glory to God in the highest - and in the lowest!
For you have come down to us, Lord!
The cars in the street thank you in tumult
The cattle in the stall thank you in silence
The birds in the air thank you in song

The footballers on the pitch thank you in play
The patients in the hospital thank you in fretfulness
The dogs by the shop door thank you in patience
The stars in the sky, the waves of the sea, the peoples of the world,
the forces in the atom
All things bow their knee to you, above the earth, on the earth,
below the earth
Past, present and future sing together: Glory to God in the highest!

Wednesday

You have not come today - you have always been here
You have not always been here - you have come today
Both of these I say, both of these I hold
Neither of them have I truly lived
Help me, Lord, to live as though you are newly come
And as though you have always been here
Trusting in your return, and in your presence
Trusting in your judgement, and in your forgiveness
Trusting in your law, and in your grace
Trusting not in my obedience, but in your love

Thursday

Christ before me, behind me, to my left, to my right
Christ before me, that I may walk a safe road
Christ behind me, that I need fear no sudden evil
Christ to my left, to speak for me to my enemies
Christ to my right, to guard me with his shield
And Christ within me, which is more than all

Friday

Look! Here is flesh of our flesh.
Here is blood of our blood.
Here is life of our life.
And here is life of the true life.

And here is glory of the true glory.
And here is light of the true light.
Life, glory and light veiled in our flesh;
Life, glory and light veiled in your flesh;
Life, glory and light veiled in my flesh;
Look, wonder, and live!

Saturday

God is with us!
Not just with me, Not just here, Not just now
God is with us, with the whole world, to the end of the age.
When I visit the sick, the imprisoned, the fearful, God is with us
When I visit the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, God is with us
When I visit the stranger, the migrant, the lonely, God is with us
Whenever I visit my neighbour, God is with us
To the end of the age.

Close

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ took on human form to save the whole world, give us the faith to trust in His victory, and to proclaim that victory to the world he saved; through that same Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Ending Sentence

The best of all is, God is with us.